

## Why I'm Spiritually Dry, Part 4 - Romans 14:13-14 – May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled; "Why I'm Spiritually Dry."
- Here-to-fore, the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, has been revealing to us both the causes of, and sources for spiritual dryness in our lives.
- By way of both an introduction, and a review, we'll begin by taking just a little bit of time to look at the causes we have seen up to this point.

### 1. Legalism (Verses 1-2)

- Here Paul says to accept those weak in faith without passing judgment on the disputable matters such as eating meat or only vegetables.

### 2. Judgmentalism (Verses 3-4)

- Paul says not to look down on one other, as you then judge another's servant, when God accepts both, in that He is able to make us stand.

### 3. Denominationalism (Verses 5-9)

- Paul says to be convinced regarding which day we worship on or from what types of foods we abstain from, lest we cause divisiveness.

### 4. Phariseeism (Verses 10-12)

- Paul then rhetorically asks why they judge and look down on their brother when, in the end, we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

### 5. Liberalism (Verses 13-14)

(13) Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. (14) As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

- v13 Paul says that instead of our judging others, we're to make up our minds not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in our brother's way.
- v14 He says as one who's in Christ, he's fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself but if anyone regards it as unclean then for him it is.
- In other words, neither judge one another under the banner of my legalism, nor cause the sin of another under the banner of my liberalism.

- Before we go any further, I should probably provide a definition of liberalism means, in the context of what Paul is writing here in Romans.
- One online dictionary defines liberalism as the quality or state of being liberal as in behavior or attitude emphasizing freedom from tradition.
- Simply put, liberalism in the life of a believer though not necessarily a sin for that believer can cause stumbling and sin for another believer.

Charles Spurgeon - "You have the Liberty to do as you please, but do not use that liberty if it would be mischievous to your brother in Christ. If your action, though right in itself, would have a tendency to destroy his soul, deny yourself for love's sake."

1 Corinthians 8:9-13 NIV (9) Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. (10) For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? (11) So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. (12) When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. (13) Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

- By way of an example, I'm going to talk about the liberty that some Christians have when it comes to the forbidden topic of drinking wine.
- To say that this is a controversial topic within Christendom would be a gross understatement by virtue of all the conflict this has caused.
- Especially for those who led lifestyles riddled with alcoholism before they came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and were delivered.

- Now I know what I'm about to say may jam some gears but there is nowhere in the Bible where it says it's sin for a Christian to drink wine.
- Let me hasten to say that while the Bible does not say it's a sin to drink wine, the Bible absolutely does say it's a sin to become a drunkard.
- Not only is it a sin in our liberalism to become a drunkard we also sin in our legalism to judge others who exercise their liberty to drink wine.

One commentator said it best this way, "I am convinced that the consumption of alcohol is a Romans 14 kind of issue that falls within the bounds of Christian liberty. This necessarily means that one abstains because he believes that this is what the Lord requires while another partakes because he believes that the Lord has given him this kind of freedom. Both do it based on their understanding of Scripture and both do it to heed conscience. ...neither one is sinning and both are required to obey conscience."

- By the way, drinking wine is just one of the "disputable matters" that we as Christians can get caught up in either our liberalism or legalism.
- Other disputable matters would include such things as getting tattoos, smoking, watching R rated movies or TV, even birth control as well.
- The reason I point this out is that whether or not a Christian has the liberty or does not have the liberty, isn't really the point of the passage.

- The point of the passage is to be convinced in my mind concerning these things in so much as I may have the liberty to do these things.
- This of course presupposes my liberty to do these things doesn't pass judgment on another, nor puts a stumbling block in front of another.
- Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, this also presupposes my liberty doesn't end up creating the proclivity to become sin for me.

- Let me explain, drinking wine can become an addiction, and as such I can become a drunkard and in so doing, my liberty is now sin for me.
- Additionally, I can exercise my liberty to drink wine, and as such I can stumble my brother and in so doing, my liberalism is now sin for me.
- Conversely, to abstain from drinking can breed spiritual pride and as such I will judge others and in so doing, my legalism is now sin for me.

- Here's the bottom line, liberalism in the life of a Christian is like a puka that gets bigger over time and in so doing it drains me dry spiritually.
- It's just a matter of time before it dries me up and takes me down by virtue of how I have no regard for God, nor a love for God's people.
- This is evidenced by only thinking about what I want and not what God wants such that I become narcissistic, which is next week's sermon.